

St. Vincent de Paul

Winter 2014

Volume 9, Issue 1



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Upcoming Events

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Society of St. Vincent de Paul - Rogue Valley District



Candles balance on the heads of Delphine Peyton and her Hawaiian dancers as part of one out of several spectacular and thrilling Hawaiian dances at this year's Light the Winter Fires Luau dinner and auction.

Light the Winter Fires - Luau Style!

Our fifth annual Light the Winter Fires dinner auction was different on several levels. We held the event in mid- September instead of October. The event was held outdoors at the Bybee Historic Inn of Jacksonville. The format was casual with FUN being more of a goal in the fundraising. Oh yeah, the theme was a Luau (hard to be semi-formal with leis and Hawaiian shirts). From island music to late afternoon breezes, a grass floor to hula and fire dancers, Rosemary and Garth Harrington kept the fun and activities flowing with a rhythm only they have as emcees.

If the volume and frequency of conversations during the initial social time was any indication of the mood of the guests, then it was obvious the

festivities and good-times would last throughout the evening. The heads and tails ice breaker was well received, and the best Hawaiian shirt was recognized with a gift basket. A delicious Luau dinner, by Ron Dunn, was enjoyed amid his wonderful island décor.

Delphine Peyton and her Hawaiian dancers, charmed those present with their hula swaying. Ali Aukusitino and her brother Mala performed a traditional Princess dance followed by Mala's exciting and authentic fire dance. They all volunteered their time and performances for the benefit of us all and St Vincent de Paul.

Len Hebert announced the recipients of the Annual St Vincent de Paul Len Hebert Humanitarian Award. Jerry and Jeanne Taylor were recognized for their
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Light the Winter Fires... Continued

long standing as supporters of St Vincent de Paul and as community leaders, benefactors and true humanitarians. Medford Councilman Bob Strosser shared the resolution by Mayor Gary Wheeler which declared Sunday, September 15th as Jerry and Jeanne Taylor Day.

Then Rosemary and Garth went back to the mikes to accomplish the money raising portion of the evening as only they can, with effectiveness and plenty of humor. The winning bidders were critical to our fundraising efforts but we could not have done any of it without all those who donated the auction items and prizes. Mahalo to those who donated and attended. Mahalo, also, to Innkeepers Tina Marie and Vikki Lynn for providing the awesome venue of Bybee's and a wonderful auction item, a stay at the inn.

Jerry Basilicato of Tekmanagement and Vincentians Michael Morgan, Al Zon, Socorro Holloway, along with many others, including community bankers, friends and family helped to bring the festivities to completion.

I must say the biggest and most deserved Mahalo to the Vincentians who met over numerous months and especially the last few weeks prior to the Luau dinner auction. Fran Davis-Cox, Susann Burke, Kathy Begley and Tedde Ridley and led by Len Hebert did the incredible job of finding a way to make this event a reality. They had a vision to make this year more enjoyable and festive than the past, and they succeeded with as much color as there was in all the shirts and dresses wore by those present.

To all I say Mahalo, Mahalo Mahalo.

Written by Dennis Mihocko

Letter from the President



Since this will be my last President's letter before Socorro Holloway becomes Council President (and an answer to many prayers), I wanted to use the opportunity to tell you a little more about Socorro. She was born in a small steel mill town in western Pennsylvania. No, wait a minute, that was me. Socorro was born in Chihuahua, Mexico and moved to Barstow, CA in 1968 when she got married to Mike Hall. There they built a business dynasty which included franchise stores Montgomery Ward Catalog Store, Mode O'Day lady's clothing store, two Stop and Go Convenience Markets as well as three towing companies and a liquor store.

They had two children, a son who died at age 37 from an automobile accident while living in Aurora, IL. He was never married. Their daughter is Dean of Human Resources at El Camino College California and lives in San Anselmo, CA. She gave them a granddaughter who has now given them a great-grandson.

Mike passed away after a battle with lung cancer from being a heavy smoker. After his passing the stores were sold and Socorro became semi-retired. During his illness, the family met Bill Holloway and his family when his wife was under cancer treatment at the

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Letter from the President... continued

same time as Mike. The families became close especially with the passing of their spouses and a few years later Bill and Socorro were married in 1990 and moved to Medford because friends had said how beautiful it was here.

Bill was retired from the Navy but Socorro was not yet ready to retire. She went to work for Security Pacific Bank in 1990 and it was bought by Bank of America. She became friends with Kathy Begley who also worked at B of A and Socorro was Bank Operations Manager prior to retiring. Even while she was still working, Bill and Socorro answered a plea by Dave Moosman for the Shepherd of the Valley St Augustine Home Visit team to become volunteers. Bill and she would do home visits after 6:00 PM when she got off work. They are still very active doing home visits and Bill has become the President of this ministry.

In 2007, Socorro also became a counsellor in Sacred Heart Social Service conference on Wednesdays, her day off. When she retired in 2009 from the bank and following the retirement of Nola Geaney as conference President in 2010, Dave Moosman recruited Socorro to become the new President. For more than three years, she has led Social Services in administering over \$500,000 in client assistance to more and more people every year.

Socorro is also an avid outdoors person. White water rafting class 4 and 5 rapids of the Rogue, Klamath and even the Colorado River of the Grand Canyon, is just some of the proof of her life as an adventurer. Once, on a trip to Japan she took the opportunity to hike Mt Fuji. She is a member of a senior citizen hiking group with whom she hikes in summer and skis and snowshoes in winter. She fascinates me with her tales of trekking through

mountains and forests and her group is planning a trip to Machu Pichu, Peru in 2014.

Through many prayers, meetings and soulful considerations, the President selection committee was successful in recruiting Socorro to become our *continued on page 8*



Many enjoy Christmas Day Dinner together at St Vincent de Paul

Christmas Day Dinner

We served 251 on Christmas day. It was a bit different than most days as most of our guests arrived between 10:30 and 11:00, were greeted by volunteer greeters and ask to sit at any table for the duration of their meal. So we had about 180 guests sitting, many for the entire 2 hours, and over 60 volunteers moving around helping to serve our guests.

The meal got underway at 11:00 after Dan Leavitt, the chaplain from Pelican Bay prison, opened up the celebration with prayer over the PA. Christmas music played overhead thanks to Nick and was mostly drowned out by the festive and merry sound of voices laughing and sharing. We served ham, sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes/gravy, stuffing, parmesan creamed veggies, soup, cranberry, warm garlic bread, and tossed salad. This year, we had a dedicated dessert table staffed by great volunteers with all kinds of cakes and pies and ice cream. In addition, we had a drinks table staffed by volunteers pouring soda pop, egg nog, apple cider, orange juice, *continued on page 4*

Christamas Day Dinner... continued

milk, and water. New also this year was an appetizer/munchies table staffed by a family of volunteers who kept our guests happy with great cheeses from the Rogue Creamery, carrots, olives, and crackers. And not to be left out, we also had a fruit table staffed by a waitress and her daughters who mingled with the crowd and giving out oranges, apples, and pineapples while also distributing bags of apples.

Nadine, from the Wednesday crew, served as master of ceremony as she made announcements over the PA, performed and engaged our guests in singing, contests, and generally provided needed communication in a room so full of controlled chaos. She specifically praised and thanked the volunteers and conveyed respectful appreciation to all our guests. She was also our cookie and candy girl as she went from table to table mingling and passing out chocolates and cookies to all who had room. One could probably call her the volunteer smoozer. Each dining room serving volunteer made sure their assigned guest received an appropriately selected Christmas present. Seven volunteers led by John Hoffman, worked in the pantry sorting and giving out gifts to the table "hosts" for their particular diners. Thanks to the wonderful shoe box program run by Sacred Heart Catholic School, we had about 80 gift boxes - mostly for men and women - to disperse. Not to be outdone, Sacred Heart Catholic Church donated over 2 pickup trucks full of bagged or wrapped gifts of gloves, blankets, sweats, socks, etc. etc. The ladies of the American Quilting Conference donated about 50 pillowcases stuffed with toiletries, socks, shampoo, etc, plus 10 colorful quilts. Other miscellaneous donations included boxes full of warm socks, gloves, caps, etc. All in all, John and his elves, distributed over 200 gifts. Additionally, a family quietly

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In Memoriam, Dee Stormberg



Dee Stormberg, volunteer extraordinaire

Recently, it seems that I have had to say goodbye to more and more volunteers due to moving away, illness, disability, or death. Though future Vincentian volunteers keep coming to help serve the needy, the passing of one of our own hits me, and most of us, especially hard. It was definitely true when Dee Stormberg, our volunteer coordinator, became ill again and passed away October 12th, 2013.

Dee and I shared an office and so we were often competing for telephonic airspace. "I'm on the phone here" was communicated with a glance, and I usually was not the victor in that battle. Anyone who is recruiting for additional volunteers, has top phone priority in my book.

Often, I would listen to Dee talk to prospective helpers on the phone, and more than once, heard her say to rather loquacious Vincentian candidates to "not talk so much when you interview with a conference president". Or she would advise them to "listen and learn when you start volunteering and do not try to make changes your first day." Dee was a master at defusing a new volunteer whom had not returned because the job, or the other

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Dee Stormberg... continued

volunteers were not what they expected. Often, Dee would get them to try volunteering one more time with the same conference or another one, and they would keep coming back.

Dee had a way of telling you what she thought, or what we should do, and it was like listening to an older sister who you knew was usually right. She was a valued source of information in an array of subjects, especially medical. Being a retired nurse, wife to Jack for close to sixty years, mother of nine, grandma of 23, and great-grandma to 4, as well as, foster mom to 15 children, adding in status as a world traveler and a part-time Arizonan, Dee had the life experience to back up any knowledge or advice she could impart. If I asked her a question, I could count on her best answer or advice for a further source.

I learned her favorite sushi was a caterpillar when I offered to go get lunch late one afternoon. When I have sushi, I remember her fondly. I think of her often with an ache for someone lost, but a joy for a life well lived and for someone who made a huge difference in so many lives.

Dee, Jack, and I stayed in touch by email, phone, and at church, when Dee got too sick to volunteer. I was amazed at her resilience and her concern for myself and all of us at St Vincent. She *continued on page 8*

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Rich Hansen, Sue Naumes (OCF Board Member), and Socorro Holloway

Generous Walker Fund

The Reed and Carolee Walker Fund of The Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) is celebrating ten years of extraordinary support to Jackson County nonprofit organizations. During that period, our Council has received \$465,000 from this fund.

This year the Reed and Carolee Walker Fund increased their annual contribution to \$65,000, according to our grant writer Rich Hansen. They are our largest single benefactor. The Walker funds are used by Social Services for rent and utility payments.

Ten years ago, the Walker estate created a permanent endowment worth \$29 million, with earnings allocated to serve people who need assistance. Their fund has supported 66 Jackson County nonprofits with grants totaling close to \$18 million. Thanks to OCF's good management, the initial bequest has grown to \$43 million.

Reed Walker grew up in Kansas City, the son of bakery owners. The bakery was sold in the early 1940s to Anheuser Busch, with payment to his parents in Budweiser stock.

Reed and his wife Carolee eventually moved to Ashland. Carolee passed away in 1999 and Reed joined her in 2002. Their continuing generosity has made a significant impact on nonprofits like St. Vincent de Paul.

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Amazing Annual Collectible Sale



Some of our Amazing Volunteers help out in the Thrift Store for the Annual Collectible Sale!

Six days a week our beloved Thrift store volunteers turn all those donated, used items into the revenue that makes our other conferences able to provide all the services we have become known for. But then all those same volunteers go the extra miles, above and beyond, par excellence, make the additional efforts, and every hyperbole you can use, to create a wonderland of memorabilia on the first Sunday in October called the St Vincent de Paul Annual Collectible Sale. Karen McNeilly and her mother-in-law Dorothy Walterick, along with all the volunteers and many practiced eyes, save up the items that seem vintage, unique, or just plain old, but still desirable, until September each year. Then they start sorting, organizing, and pricing those special articles that will be collectively displayed on that magical Sunday.

On the Friday and Saturday prior to the sale, many of the store volunteers toil and labor to rearrange and transform the usual thrift store business into a treasure trove reminiscent of Santa's toy shop and Grandma's attic. Pot luck treats and food are brought in by some of those same volunteers, to keep everyone nourished and sustained. Some recipes of homemade chili, pastas, casseroles and desserts have become legendary.

This year, the Fifteenth to be precise, like other years' collectible sales, was also unique as each year's event is. Though the Sunday sale was publicized and

well attended, it didn't seem more so than other years. But as prize fighters are often known by the reach, weight and height called the tale of the tape, this year's sale was the heavyweight of all collectible sales. The "Tale of the Tape" for 2013 was an incredible \$29,000 on Sunday October 6th and more than \$20,000 over the next six days in additional revenues.

Thanks to the store volunteers, the school supply program will receive \$40,000 to help provide needy children, grades K-12, with a better start to the new school year in August 2014.

This record setting Collectible Sale was barely over and most of those same volunteers, started sorting, inspecting and pricing donated yuletide articles for the Christmas sale which adds tens of thousands of green backs to the impressive daily sale totals. The volunteers make all this happen, but as President John Hoffman, of the Blessed Anna Maria store conference said to me recently, Karen McNeilly has brought an expertise, knowledge and passion to the store for over twenty years. On behalf of all St Vincent de Paul supporters, I thank all our wonderful volunteers and especially those who work so hard with Karen and Dorothy, to make this sale and every daily sales, such a huge and essential success. You rock!

Written by Dennis Mihocko

Light One Candle

Life did not get off to a good start for this 48 year-old, registered nurse (featured in the “Light One Candle” series in the Mail Tribune.) St. Anthony Shelter resident Lisa Mahoney was one of the first five girls ever to live in Boys Town in Nebraska; leaving behind an abusive mother and a father who abandoned her before she was born. But Boys Town and its director, the late Father Hupp (who was also her godfather) gave her the tools and the desire to make a better life for herself.

She graduated from Washington State University and became a cardiac critical care nurse. And then went on to graduate School at Gonzaga University in Spokane.

Now she is facing the fight of her life, having been diagnosed four months ago with end-stage liver failure, and given less than a year to live.

Her only wish was to hold her twin red-headed grand babies in her arms before she dies. And now that wish has come true. The article that ran in the newspaper got quick and generous responses. So with a wing and a prayer, Lisa and her husband James will fly to Washington with donated airline miles.

“It is such a blessing,” Lisa says.

Lisa and James arrived in Medford in September. They had their own place in Corpus Christi, Texas, and her spouse had a good job. “We thought the pollution and climate were making me sick,” she said. And even though the husband's family lived there, it was not a good situation.

Being people of faith, they prayed and then opened a map of the United States. Their fingers landed between Medford and Portland. They got on the Greyhound Bus and began the journey to Medford. Two days after arriving, she ended up in the hospital for a week. “They finally found out what was wrong



Lisa Mahoney, featured in Mail Tribune's “Light One Candle” series

with me,” she says. “I had so many diagnoses, but my primary health care physician managed to put all the puzzle pieces together.”

The hospital wanted her to go to a nursing home. Instead, the couple came to stay at the shelter of St. Vincent de Paul. She did not want to be separated from her beloved.

Within two weeks, James had a job. They are saving money for a place to live and things are looking slightly better. They did receive cash donations from the article along with the flight. But Lisa still needs a liver transplant and is waiting on Social Security Disability) so she can get on the transplant list.

Yet the liver is not her main worry: Seeing the twins is. And thanks to the generosity of many, she will.

As for her future, she is philosophical:

“It is part of the circle of life,” she says. “From Boy’s Town to St. Vincent’s: God always has me in his arms. I am thankful for every minute of my life. And to all the people who gave to us. Thank you!”

Written by Kathy Morgan

Letter from the President... continued

new council President.

Socorro says that “I am looking forward to heading the SVDP council. Our volunteers are a great resource of knowledge. We are SVDP family; working together we will keep our great organization going.”

For myself, I have enjoyed being President the past three years and I will continue being involved as Past President for up to one year and will continue to be facilities manager after that. It has always given me great pride in talking and discussing all that you wonderful volunteers do day in and day out. Thank you for supporting me and I know you will support Socorro in the same way. She is a very capable and wonderful lady and leader. We are blessed by her agreement to be our President. Thank you Socorro and thank you all. God Bless Us All Always.

Christamas Day Dinner... continued

arrived with big bags of wrapped gifts which they gave to every seated guest before just as mysteriously disappearing. They never even took their jackets off.

Channel 5 and Channel 10 came by and shot video. And it was evident from that coverage that a good time was had by all. Thank you to all the volunteers that made this Christmas Day Dinner so successful and to Richard Morley, John Hoffman, Socorro Holloway, Nadine and all those who took charge to bring it all together. Ho Ho Ho Merry Christmas.

Written by Richard Morley and John Hoffman

Dee Stormberg... continued

really touched my heart when Father Jim and Father Mike both shared that Dee had said “Maybe my funeral will be the first one” at Shepherd of the Valley’s newly dedicated church. It was not only the first funeral in the new church but the first mass said there by Pastor Mike Walker following the dedication of the new church by Archbishop Alexander Sample. I think Dee was smiling on us all over that.

For Dee and all our Vincentians who left us this year, our prayers and thoughts are with them and their families.

Written by Dennis Mihocko

Generous Walker Fund... continued

The Oregon Community Fund recently awarded St. Vincent’s two additional grants. The Kitchen Conference received \$20,000 for dining room table and chair replacement. The Council also received \$5,000 from the Coleman Family Fund.

Written by Rich Hansen

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Society of St. Vincent de Paul

2424 N Pacific Highway
Medford, OR 97501

Phone: 541-772-3828
E-mail: vincent@mind.net
Website: www.stvincentdepaulmedford.info



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Office & Social Services

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Thrift Store

541-779-3648

Monday—Saturday, 10 - 4

Dining Room

Monday—Saturday, 11 - 1

Pantry

Last two Fridays of each month, 10 - 1

La Clinica

Medical - 2nd and 4th Thursdays, 1-6pm,
warehouse in rear parking lot

Dental - Every Thursday, 1-6pm,
warehouse in rear parking lot

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Newsletter Writers/Editors/Designers

Dennis Mihocko, Larry Mullaly, Kathy Morgan, Richard Morley, John Hoffman, Rich Hansen, Socorro Holloway, and Jennifer and Michael Morgan

